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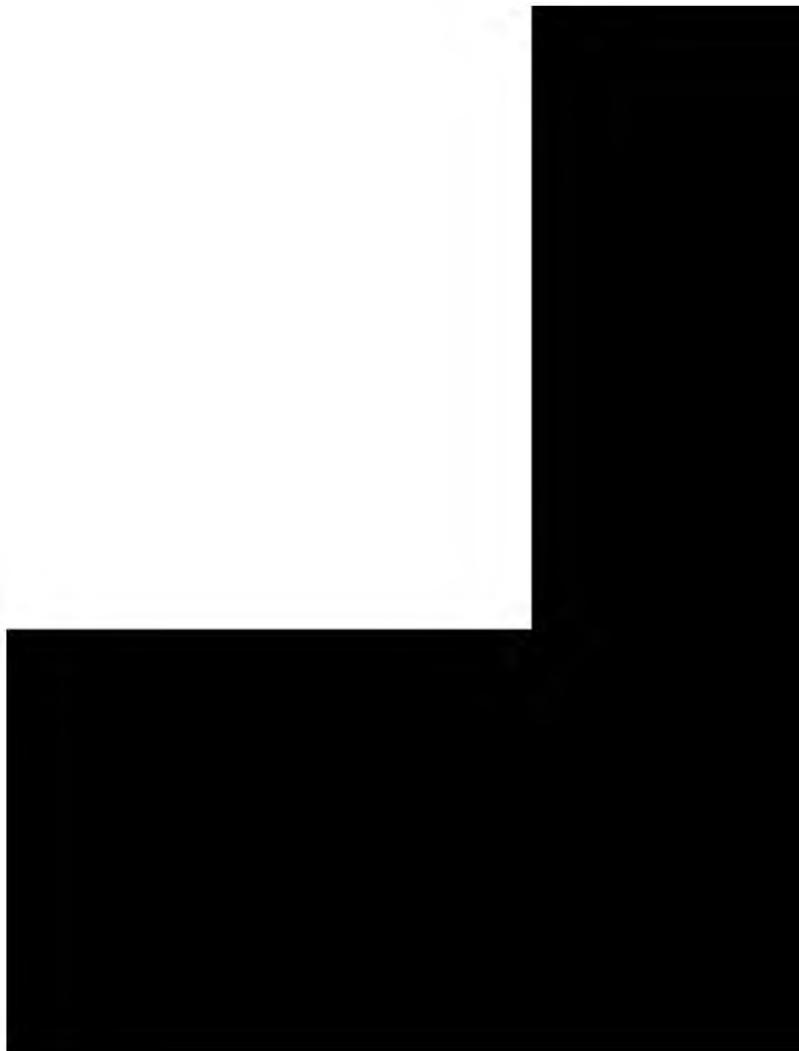
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T O

BONNELL THORNTON, Esq.

Quocunque animum auditoris agunto.

HOR.

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[*]

T H E

A C T O R.

A CTING, dear *Bonnell*, it's Perfection draws
From no Observance of mechanic Laws.

No settled Maxims of a fav'rite Stage,
No Rules deliver'd down from Age to Age,
Let Players nicely mark them as they will,
Can e'er entail hereditary Skill.

If 'mongst the humble Hearers of the Pit,
At some lov'd Play the old Man chance to fit,

B

Am

The Mind recalls an Object held more
d hates the Copy that it comes so ne
hy lov'd we *Wilks's* Air, *Booth's* nervo
them 'twas natural, 'twas all their ov
Garrick's Genius must our Wonder r
ut gives his Mimic no reflected Praife.
hristie happy Genius, whose unrival'd
hall live for ever in the Voice of Fame!
'is thine to lead with more than magic
he Train of captive Passions at thy W
o bid the bursting Tear spontaneous
the sweet Sense of sympathetic Woe

And at the old Man's Look and frantic Stare
 'Tis *Lear* alarms me, for I see him there.
 Nor yet confin'd to tragic Walks alone
 The comic Muse too claims thee for her own.
 With each delightful Requisite to please,
 Taste, Spirit, Judgment, Elegance, and Ease,
 Familiar Nature forms thy only Rule,
 From *Ranger's Rake* to *Drugger's* vacant Fool.
 With Powers so pliant, and so various blest,
 That what we see the last, we like the best.
 Not idly pleas'd at Judgment's dear Expence
 But burst ourageous with the laugh of Sense.

PERFECTION's Top with weary Toil and Pain
 'Tis Genius only that can hope to gain.
 The Play'r's Profession (tho' I hate the Phrase,
 'Tis so *mechanic* in these modern Days)

long-reit Paminon doits into the
ind untouched, what is it but Grimad
s one Standard make your just Appeal
es the golden Secret ; learn to FEEL.
ol or Monarch, happy or distrest,
ctor pleases that is not *possess'd*.
CE on the Stage in *Rome's* declining D
n Christians were the Subject of their P
ersecution dropp'd her iron Rod,
Mortals wag'd an impious War with C
ctor flourish'd of no vulgar Fame,
re's Disciple, and *Genest* his Name.

Resign'd with Patience to Religion's Laws,
 Yet braving Monarchs in his *Saviour's Cause*.
 Fill'd with th' Idea of the sacred Part,
 He felt a Zeal beyond the reach of Art,
 While Look and Voice, and Gesture all exprest
 A kindred Ardour in the Player's Breast,
 Till as the Flame thro' all his Bosom ran,
 He lost the Actor and commenc'd the Man:
 Profest the Faith, his pagan Gods denied,
 And what he acted then, he after died.

THE Player's Province they but vainly try,
 Who want these pow'rs *Deportment, Voice, and Eye*.
 THE Critic Sight 'tis only *Grace* can please
 No Figure charms us if it has not *Ease*.

There

I rate no Actor's Merit from his Size.
Superior Height requires superior Grace
And what's a Giant with a vacant Face?

THEATRIC Monarchs in their tragic Pace
Affect to mark the solemn Pace of State,
One Foot put forward in Position strong,
The other like its Vassal dragg'd along,
So grave each Motion, so exact and slow,
Like wooden Monarchs at a Puppet Show.

The Mien delights us that has native Grace

Part A. Of Action. III. Gravitas. Pace.

UNSKILFUL Actors, like your mimic Apes,
Will writhe their Bodies in a thousand Shapes ;
However foreign from the Poet's Art,
No tragic Hero but admires a Start.
What though unfeeling of the nervous Line,
Who but allows his *Attitude* is fine ?
While a whole Minute equipoiz'd he stands, •
Till Praise dismiss him with her echoing Hands.
Resolv'd, though Nature hate the tedious Pause,
By Perseverance to extort Applause.
When *Romeo* sorrowing at his *Juliet's Doom*,
With eager Madness bursts the canvass Tomb,
The sudden Whirl, stretch'd Leg, and lifted Staff,
Which please the Vulgar, make the Critic laugh.

To

pleating Pow'rs Distortions &c &c
d nicer Judgment always loaths Excel
Sock or Buskin who o'erleaps the Bound
gusts our Reason, and the Taste conf
• *about all I'sioqipre atuni elodw*
Of all the Evils which the Stage mole
nate your Fool who overacts his Jest.
Who murders what the Poet finely writ,
nd like a Bungler haggles all his Wit,
ith Shrug, and Grin, and Gesture out
nd writes a foolish Comment with his F
d Johnson once, tho' Cibber's perter V

With steady Face, and sober hum'rous Mien,
 Fill'd the strong Outlines of the comic Scene.
 What was writ down, with decent Utterance spoke,
 Betray'd no Symptom of the conscious Joke;
 The very Man in Look, in Voice, in Air,
 And though upon the Stage, he seem'd no Play'r.
 The Word and Action should conjointly suit,
 But acting Words is labour too minute.
 Grimace will ever lead the Judgment wrong,
 While sober Humour marks th' Impression strong.
 Her proper Traits the fixt Attention hit,
 And bring me closer to the Poet's Wit;
 With her delighted o'er each Scene I go,
 Well-pleas'd, and not ashamed of being so.

'Tis not enough the *Voice* be found and clear,
 'Tis Modulation that must charm the Ear.

e same soft Sounds or ~~all~~
n only make the yawning Hearers doze

THE Voice all Modes of Passion can ex-
hat marks the proper Word with proper
ut none emphatic can that Actor call,
Who lays an equal Emphasis on *all*.

SOME o'er the Tongue the labour'd Me-
Slow and delib'rate as the parting Toll,
Point ev'ry Stop, mark ev'ry Pause so
Their Words, like Stage-Processions sta-
... A festation but creates Disgust,

Nor proper, *Thornton*, can those Sounds appear,
 Which bring not Numbers to thy nicer Ear ;
 For them in vain the pleasing Measure flows
 Whose Recitation runs it all to Prose ;
 Repeating what the Poet sets not down,
 The Verb disjointing from its friendly Noun.
 While Pause, and Break, and Repetition join
 To make a Discord in each tuneful Line.

SOME placid Natures fill th' allotted Scene
 With lifeless Drone, insipid and serene ;
 While others thunder ev'ry Couplet o'er,
 And almost crack your Ears with Rant and Roar.
 In so much Noise but little Sense is found,
 As empty Barrels make the greatest Sound.

And *Hamlet's* hollow Voice and fixt A
More powerful Terror to the Mind con-
Than he, who fwol'n with big impetu-
Bullies the bulky Phantom off the Stag-

THE Modes of Grief are not includ-
In the white Handkerchief and mourn-
A single Look more marks th' intern-
Than all the Windings of the lengthe-

UP to the *Face* the quick Sensatio-
And darts its meaning from the spe-

IN vain *Ophelia* gives her Flowrets round,
 And with her Straws fantastic strews the Ground ;
 In vain now sings, now heaves the desp'rate Sigh,
 If Phrenzy sit not in the troubled Eye.
 In *Cibber's* Look commanding Sorrows speak,
 And call the Tear fast trick'ling down my Cheek.

HE who in Earnest studies o'er his Part
 Will find true Nature cling about his Heart.
 All from their Eyes impulsive Thought reveal,
 And none can want Expression, who can feel.

THERE is a Fault which stirs the Critic's Rage,
 A Want of due Attention on the Stage.
 There have been Actors, and admir'd ones too,
 Whose tongues wound up set forward from their cue.

In

the Prompter's Voice recall them home

VEST yourself of Hearers if you can,
strive to speak, and be the very Man.

should the well-bred Actor wish to kn
fits above To-night, or who below.

id th' harmonious Tones of Grief or Ra
n Squallers oft disgrace the Stage.

n with a simp'ring Leer, and Bow prof
squeaking *Cyrus* greets the Boxes roun
roud *Mandane* of imperial Race,

To suit the Dress demands the Actor's Art,
 Yet there are those who over-dress the Part.
 To some prescriptive Right gives settled Things,
 Black Wigs to Murd'lers, feather'd Hats to Kings.
 But *Michel Caffio* might be drunk enough,
 Tho' all his Features were not grim'd with Snuff.
 Why shou'd *Pol Peachum* shine in fattin Cloaths?
 Why ev'ry Devil dance in scarlet Hose?

BUT in Stage-Customs what offends me most
 Is the Slip-door, and slowly-rising Ghost.
 Tell me, nor count the Question too severe,
 Why need the dismal powder'd Forms appear?

WHEN chilling Horrors shake th' affrighted King,
 And Guilt torments him with her Scorpion Sting;

When

POET and Actor thus with blended Skill,
 Mould all our Passions to their instant Will ;
 'Tis thus, when feeling *Garrick* treads th' Stage,
 (The speaking Comment of his *Shakespear's* Page.)
 Oft as I drink the Words with greedy Ears,
 I shake with Horror, or dissolve with Tears.

One'er may Folly seize the Throne of Taste,
 Nor Dulness lay the Realms of Genius waste.
 No bouncing Crackers ape the Thundrer's Fire,
 No Tumbler float upon the bending Wire.
 More natural Uses to the Stage belong,
 Than Tumblers, Monsters, Pantomime, or Song.
 For other Purpose was that Spot design'd ;
 To purge the Passions and reform the Mind,

Thornton, to Thee I dare with Truth
The decent Stage as Virtue's natural Friend,
Tho' oft debas'd with Scenes profane and base,
No Reason weighs against it's proper Use,
Tho' the lewd Priest his sacred Function abuse,
Religion's perfect Law is still the same.

Shall they who trace the Passions from her Face,
Shew Scorn her Features, her own Image to dispraise,
Who teach the Mind it's proper Force to use,
And hold the faithful Mirrour up to Nature's true,
Shall their Profession e'er provoke Disdaine and curse?

gone, nor leave a single Trace behind

F I N I S.





